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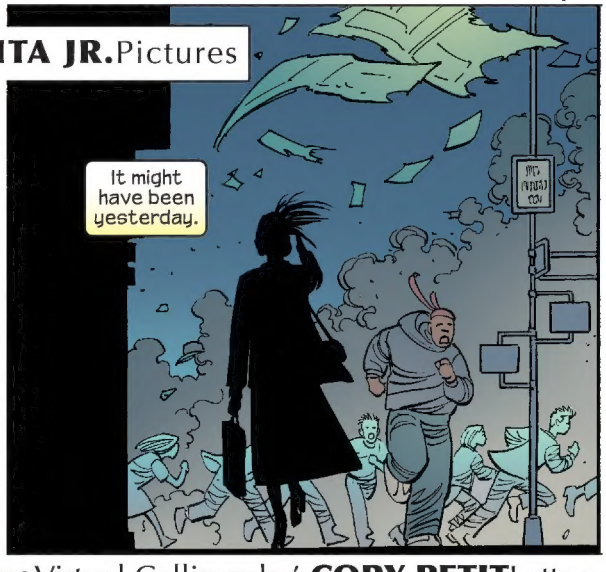
AVERY
STRACZYNSKI
ROMITA JR
HANNA
the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN
CHASING A DARK SHADOW
1 OF 2
JRJR + S.V.

CHASING A DARK SHADOW

Story by **FIONAL AVERY** and **J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI** • **FIONA AVERY** Script

JOHN ROMITA JR. Pictures



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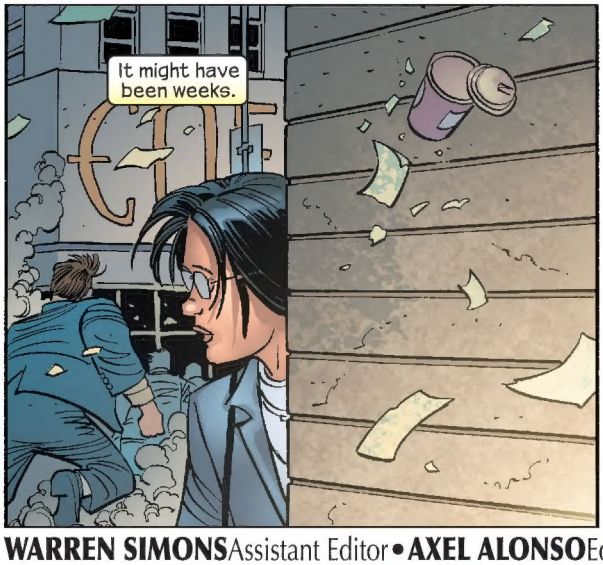

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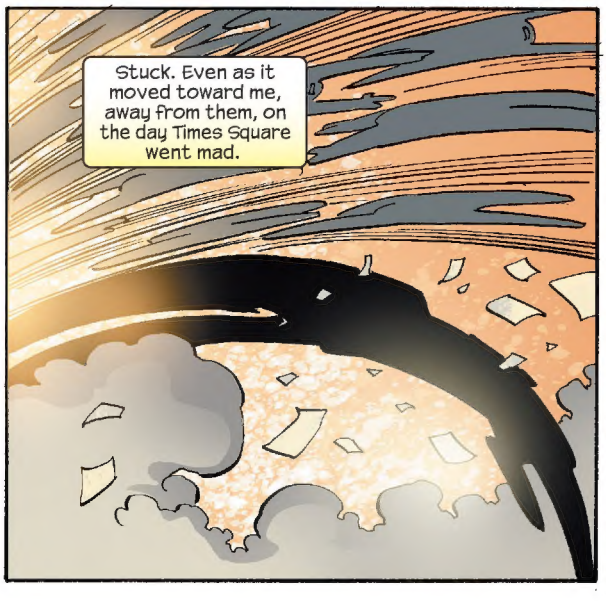
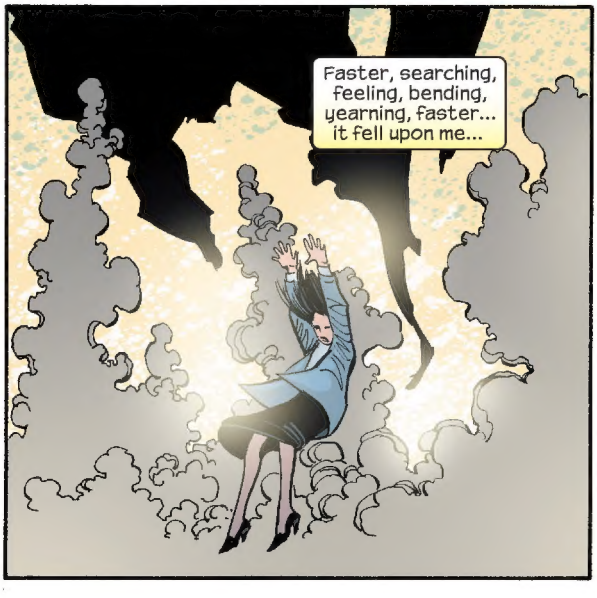
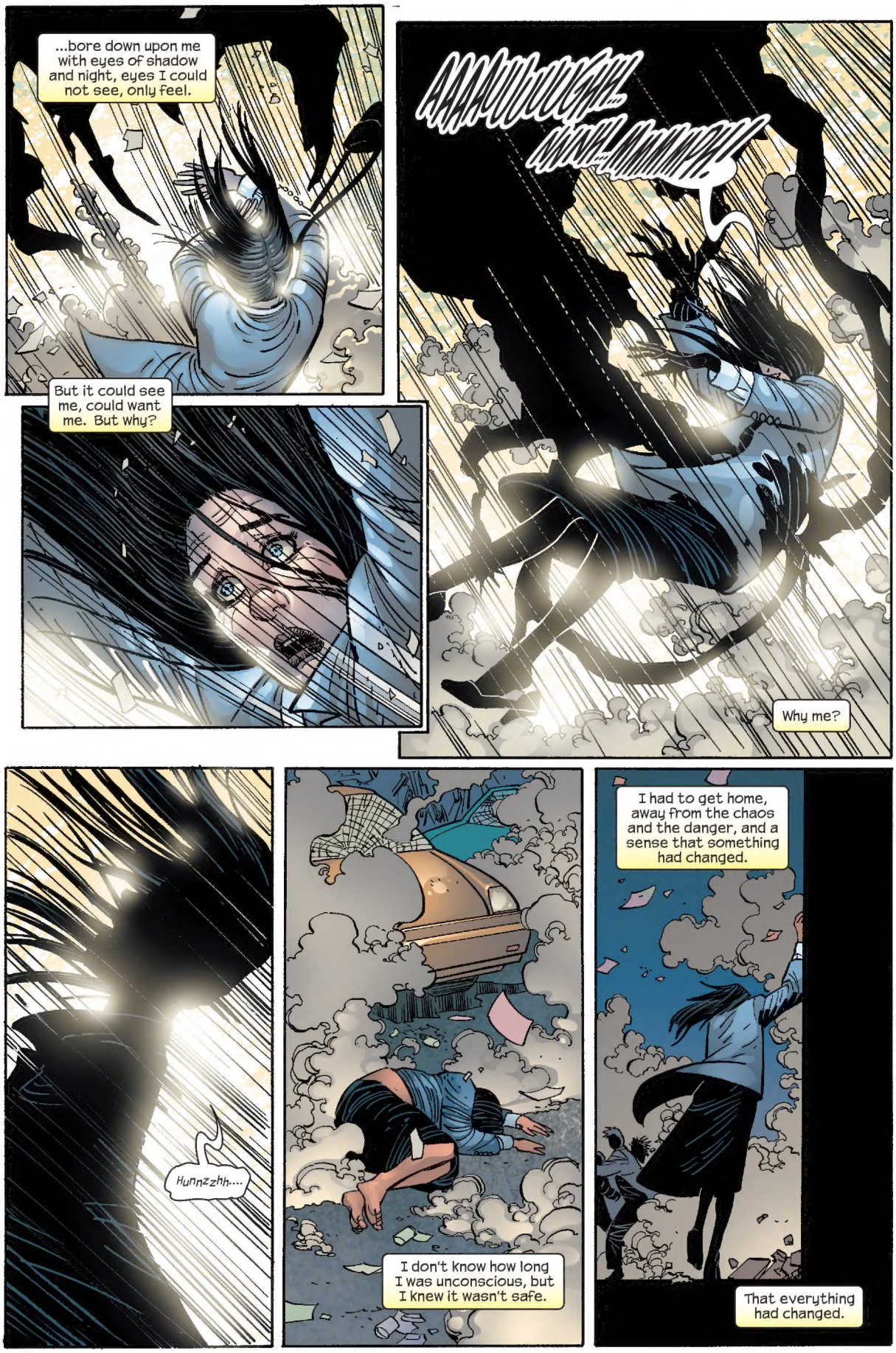
I knew it was coming. I tried to pull away, but I was stuck.

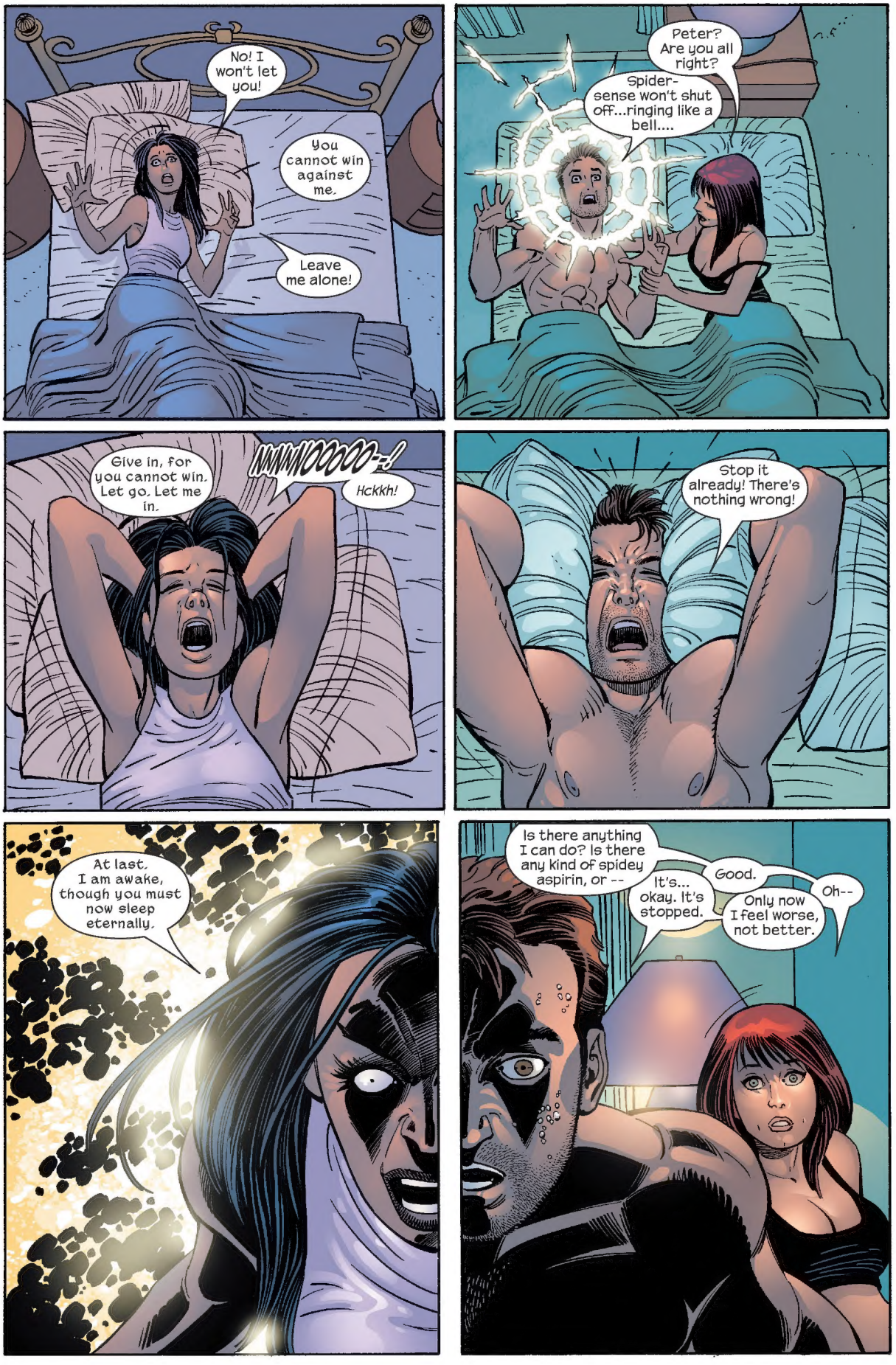
BA-DOOM!
You shouldn't be here! Your presence is changing the dynamic of the spell. Get out! Get out while you still--

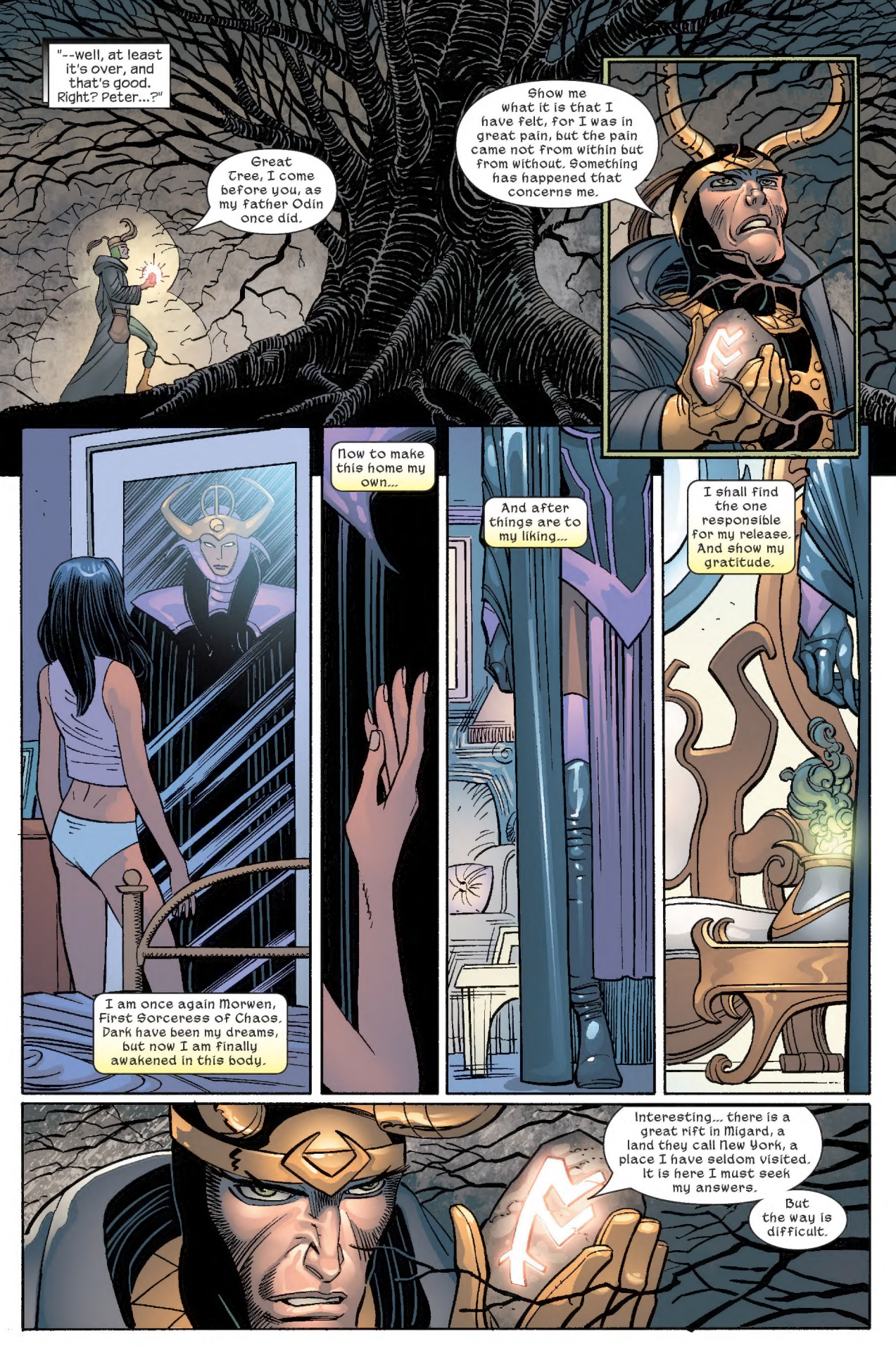

Stuck. Even as it moved toward me, away from them, on the day Times Square went mad.


Faster, searching, feeling, bending, yearning, faster... it fell upon me...

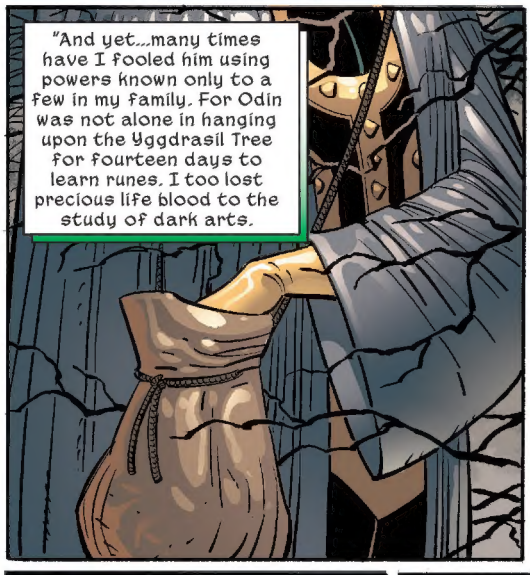

...bore down upon me with eyes of shadow and night, eyes I could not see, only feel.
But it could see me, could want me. But why?
Why me?
Hunnzzhh....
I don't know how long I was unconscious, but I knew it wasn't safe.
I had to get home, away from the chaos and the danger, and a sense that something had changed.
That everything had changed.

Not knowing that I wasn't the only one who had that suspicion.
I...
...just..
...felt...
...the...
...oddest...
...presence.

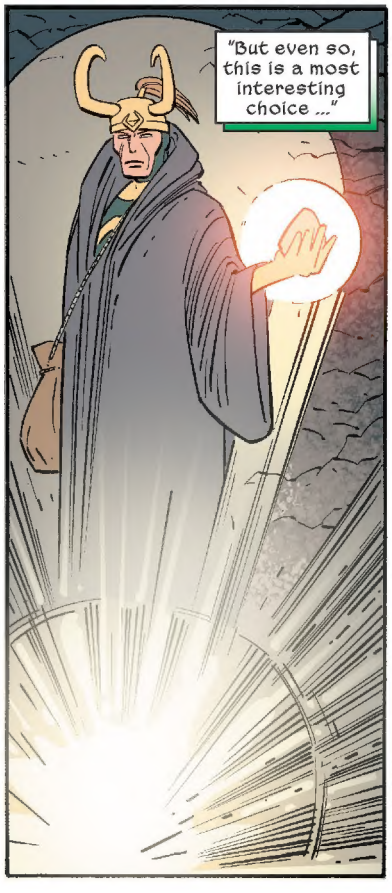

No! I won't let you!
You cannot win against me.
Leave me alone!
Peter? Are you all right?
Spider-sense won't shut off...ringing like a bell....
Give in, for you cannot win. Let go. Let me in.
NNNNOOOOO--!
Hckkh!
Stop it already! There's nothing wrong!
At last. I am awake, though you must now sleep eternally.
Is there anything I can do? Is there any kind of spidey aspirin, or --
It's... okay. It's stopped.
Good.
Only now I feel worse, not better.
Oh--

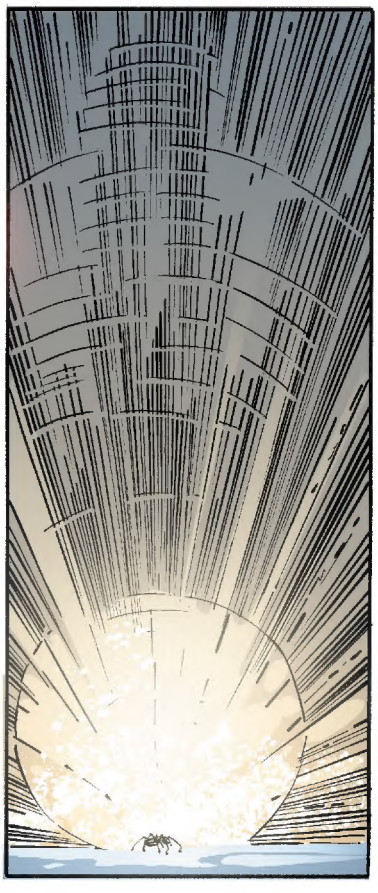

"--well, at least it's over, and that's good. Right? Peter...?"
Great Tree, I come before you, as my father Odin once did.
Show me what it is that I have felt, for I was in great pain, but the pain came not from within but from without. Something has happened that concerns me.
I am once again Morwen, First Sorceress of Chaos. Dark have been my dreams, but now I am finally awakened in this body.
Now to make this home my own...
And after things are to my liking...
I shall find the one responsible for my release. And show my gratitude.
Interesting... there is a great rift in Migard, a land they call New York, a place I have seldom visited. It is here I must seek my answers.
But the way is difficult.

"Heimdall, ever faithful, guards the Rainbow Bridge from anyone coming or going without the Allfather's permission. Even when he is being bored by conversation with that fool Volstagg, he misses nothing.

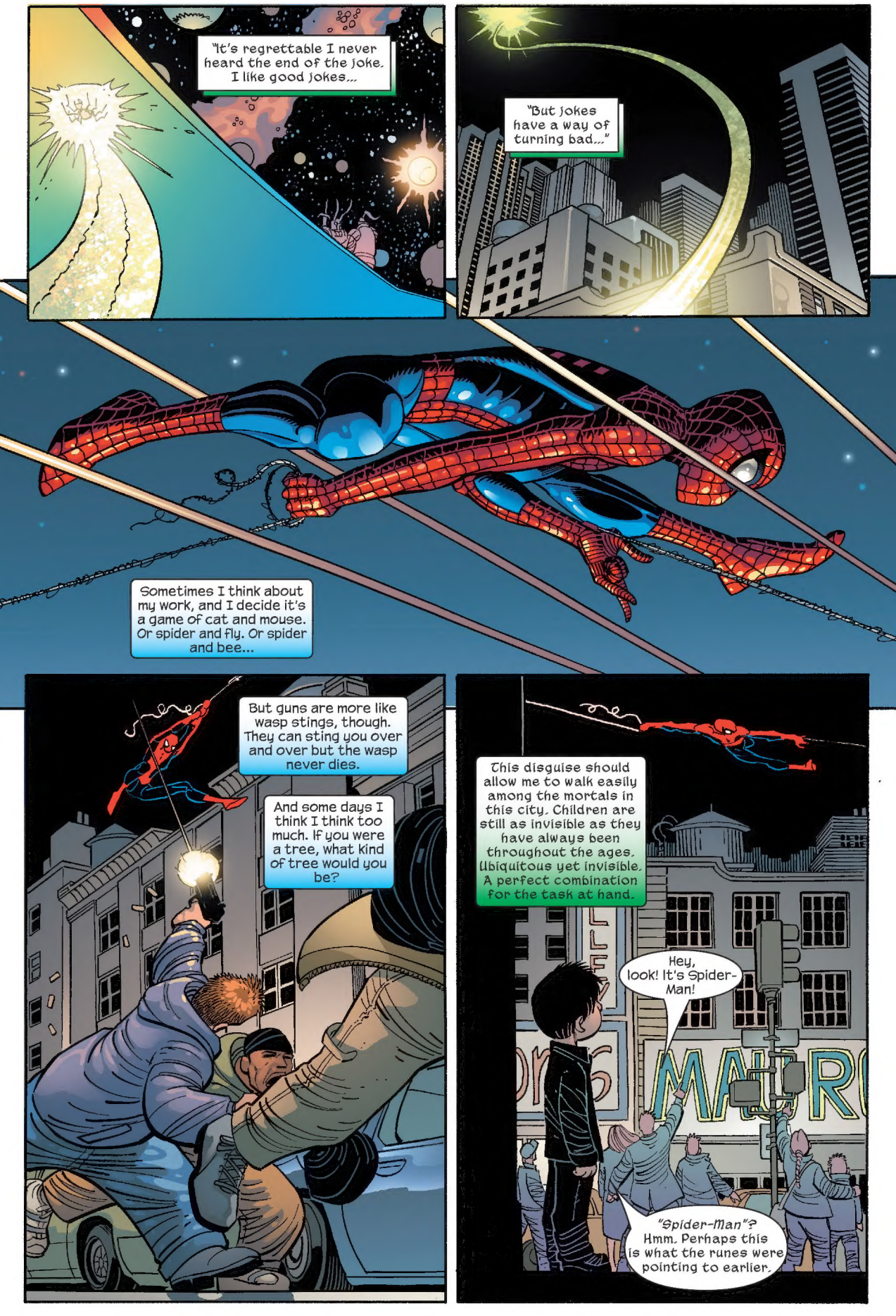

"And yet...many times have I fooled him using powers known only to a few in my family. For Odin was not alone in hanging upon the Yggdrasil Tree for fourteen days to learn runes. I too lost precious life blood to the study of dark arts.

"The runes never lie. They have an uncanny way of knowing just what disguise I need to delude my Asgardian brothers.


"But even so, this is a most interesting choice ..."

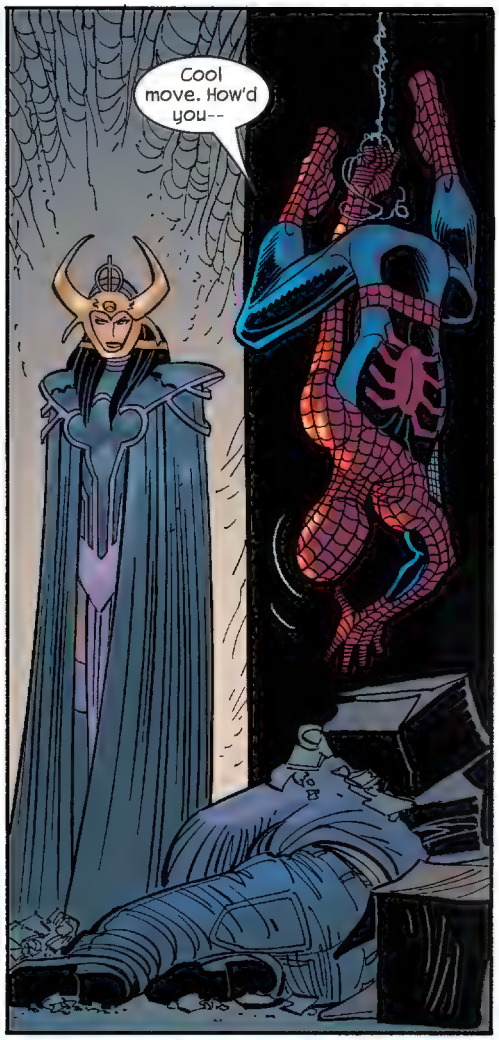


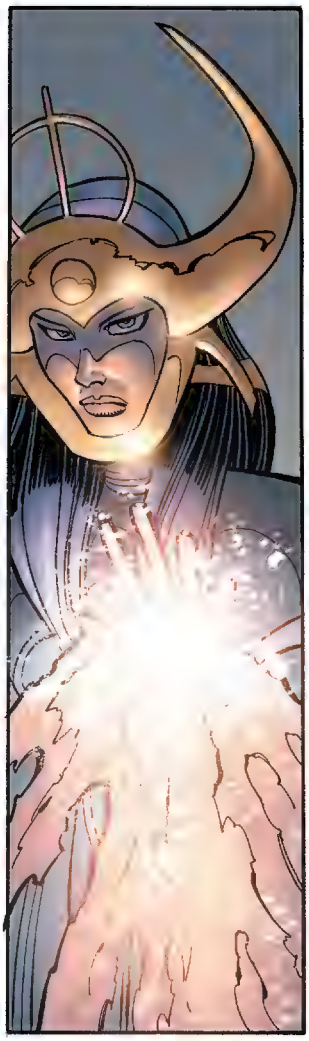
A Valkyrie, a Titan and Jesus walk into a bar...


"It's regrettable I never heard the end of the joke. I like good jokes...
"But jokes have a way of turning bad..."
Sometimes I think about my work, and I decide it's a game of cat and mouse. Or spider and fly. Or spider and bee...
But guns are more like wasp stings, though. They can sting you over and over but the wasp never dies.
And some days I think I think too much. If you were a tree, what kind of tree would you be?
This disguise should allow me to walk easily among the mortals in this city. Children are still as invisible as they have always been throughout the ages. Ubiquitous yet invisible. A perfect combination for the task at hand.
Hey, look! It's Spider-Man!
"Spider-Man"? Hmm. Perhaps this is what the runes were pointing to earlier.

As I expected, they split up. Self-preservation is rule number one among guys like this. Fashion sense probably isn't even number seven.
So I go for the guy in charge of the robbery.
Get the ringleader and sooner or later the others fall.
Ohjeez.
No, wait, don't run away on a first date, I promise, I'll apologize to your mom, tell her that her pot roast isn't really the worst I've ever had. Second worst, maybe, but--
Okay, okay, if I have to web the door shut again, I'll do it, but don't come complaining to me when--
What the--

Get out of my way, you--
Don't come near me.
Bullying filth.
AUGHHUGGHH!
CRASH!


Cool move. How'd you--



CHINK!
--whoa!
Well... nuts.

You know, normally this could crimp a guy's style. But not--

--your friendly, neighborhood Spider-Man.
Now, you want to tell me what the heck you think you're doing, lady? Is there a webbing shortage, or--

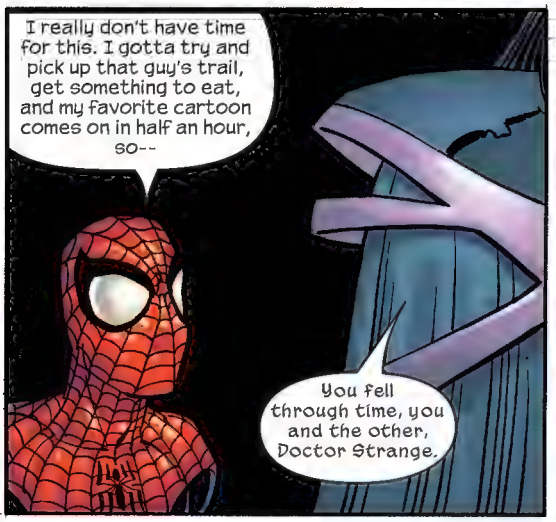
Hey! He's getting away.
He is not important.

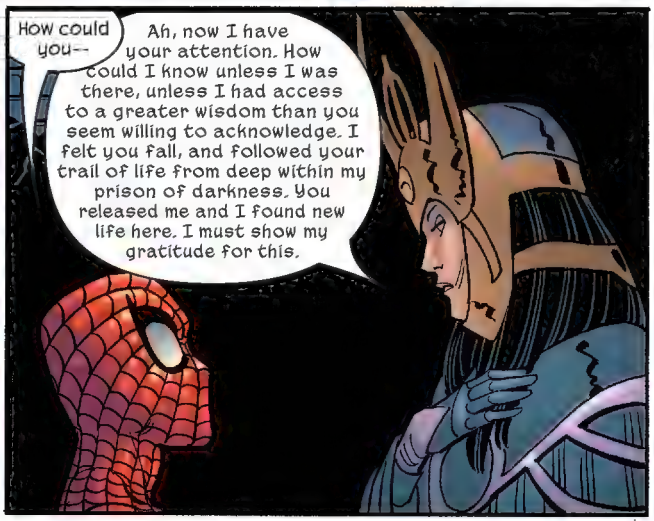
The Spider-Man is here, I can feel him.
And I feel something more, the same presence I felt before. Is he the key to what I am seeking?

Hey, kid, you know you're talking to yourself, right? Gotta watch that or you'll end up like me, and--
Silence, mortal.

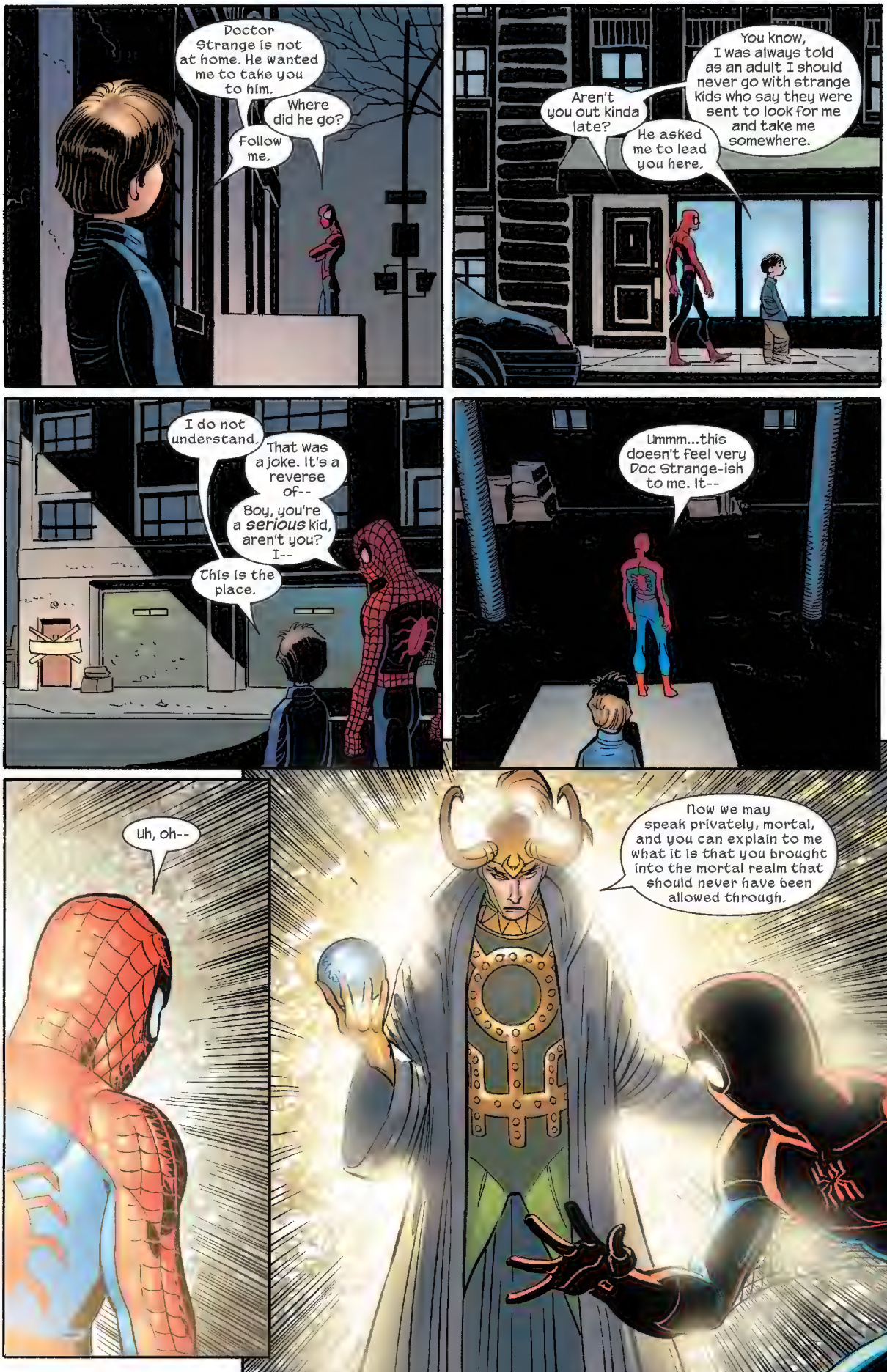
I wish to thank you.
Thank me? Can we back up a second? What part of thanking me is letting one of the bad guys get away? I don't even know you, so how can--

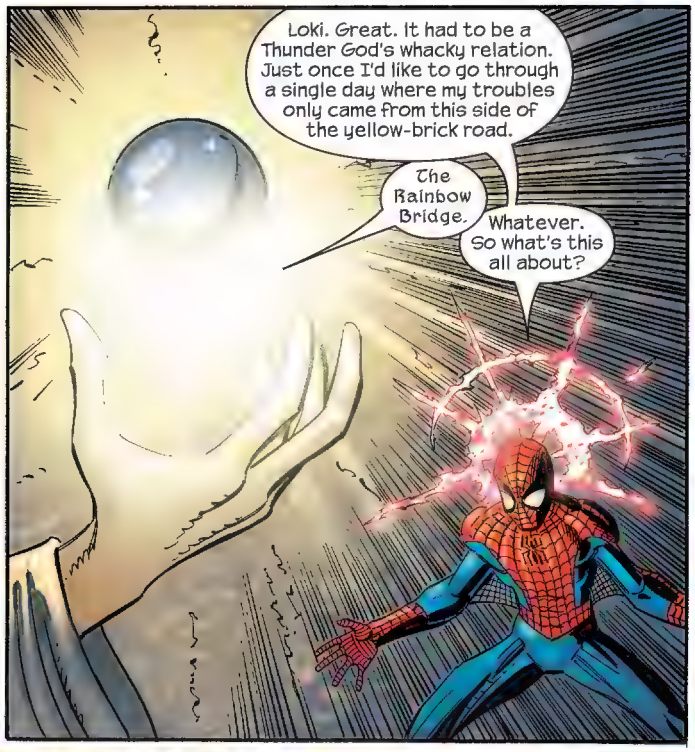
Not long ago, you released me from an ancient bondage that nearly destroyed me.
Look, lady, your lifestyle is none of my business, so--
There was a great battle between worlds. In that battle, you became my savior.


I really don't have time for this. I gotta try and pick up that guy's trail, get something to eat, and my favorite cartoon comes on in half an hour, so--
You fell through time, you and the other, Doctor Strange.


How could you--
Ah, now I have your attention. How could I know unless I was there, unless I had access to a greater wisdom than you seem willing to acknowledge. I felt you fall, and followed your trail of life from deep within my prison of darkness. You released me and I found new life here. I must show my gratitude for this.

No thanks are necessary, I'm just--
You do not understand. I must repay you. You cannot decline.
Look, lady, I'm not the one you want to thank, it's ...
Whoa, Peter, hold on, don't send the Doc any trouble he doesn't need. Let's find out what's going on first, then I'll run it past him.
On the other hand, I don't want to be rude, so...what kind of "thanks" are we talking about here?
I will give you the world. Such is my ability.
Ma'am, I don't *want* the world. I couldn't handle the world. I couldn't even manage Brooklyn.
Then again, who can?
Besides, I can't just go saying yes to strange women on the street--not that you aren't quite interesting in a... translucent sort of way, but--
I will give you a night to decide...
"...Either accept my answer, or be destroyed by the power that I possess."
Boy, talk about people who won't take no for an answer. First Shathra, now this nutbar.
Maybe it's me. Maybe I attract these kinds of women. If I do, what does that say about me?
Maybe I can get the Doc to write a book. *"Fifty Ways To Be Successful and Say No to Homicidal Interdimensional Cuties."*
Tony Robbins, eat your heart out.
Yo, Doc, you there?


Doctor Strange is not at home. He wanted me to take you to him.
Where did he go?
Follow me.
Aren't you out kinda late?
He asked me to lead you here.
You know, I was always told as an adult I should never go with strange kids who say they were sent to look for me and take me somewhere.
I do not understand.
That was a joke. It's a reverse of--
Boy, you're a *serious* kid, aren't you? I--
This is the place.
Ummm...this doesn't feel very Doc Strange-ish to me. It--
Uh, oh--
Now we may speak privately, mortal, and you can explain to me what it is that you brought into the mortal realm that should never have been allowed through.



So you're in with this Morwen? I should have known.

I have not yet even had the pleasure of talking to Morwen in her present form, though I intend to rectify that by keeping you close, because clearly it is you that she seeks. Her reappearance in this realm is of interest to me.

Odd that she is drawn to you. You are inconsequential. Powerless. A mere mortal.

Not to mention a snappy dresser and a good dancer. But I wouldn't get cocky if I were you. You haven't caught me ye--

AAAAGGHHH!

You have the smell of magicks upon you. The residue upon your skin from the interdimensional rift that Doctor Strange opened in Times Square. Morwen came through at that exact moment, sensing you as the focus. Now Doctor Strange has mysteriously disappeared and Morwen is after you.

The smell of magick. But none of it your own doing. You do not deserve her power.

What power? Loki, whose side are you on, anyway?
My side. There is no other side, not until I know everything about Morwen's reappearance on this earth.

Reappearance?
Then you know who Morwen is. You've seen her before, haven't you?

What's this all about?

Loki does not answer questions from bags of mortal flesh that die and rot and turn to dust.
Well, if you're gonna get *personal*--

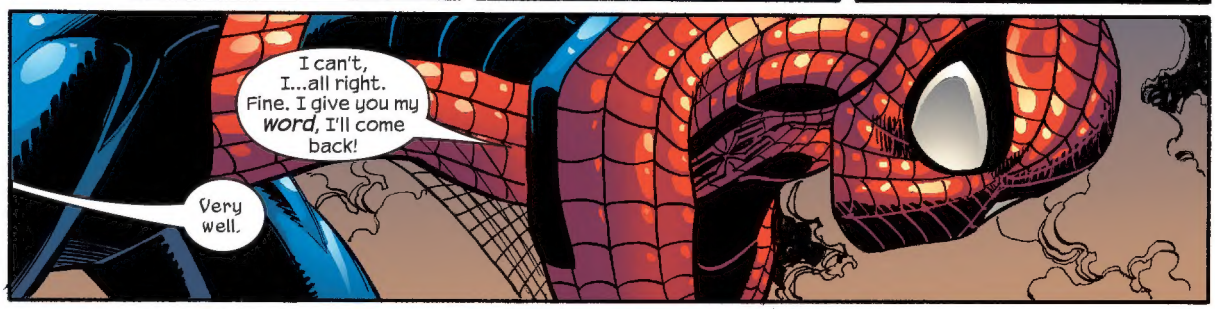
You share the same problem as all mortals. You crave power, but you wouldn't know what to do with real power if it bit you!
Yeah, well, thank goodness that's never happened.
What?
Skip it. Now if you don't mind, I have to fly--
no!

Holy--
FIRE! FIRE!
Someone call the police.
Is anyone in there? Are you hurt?
Perhaps if you will not stay at my behest, you may stay to prevent the death of someone else.
Oh my God...
Exactly.
NO!!

What have you done?!
Tell me what I want to know about Morwen and I will spare his life!

Hold on! Hang on!
He only has a matter of minutes left to live. Tell me you will stay with me and I will save him.

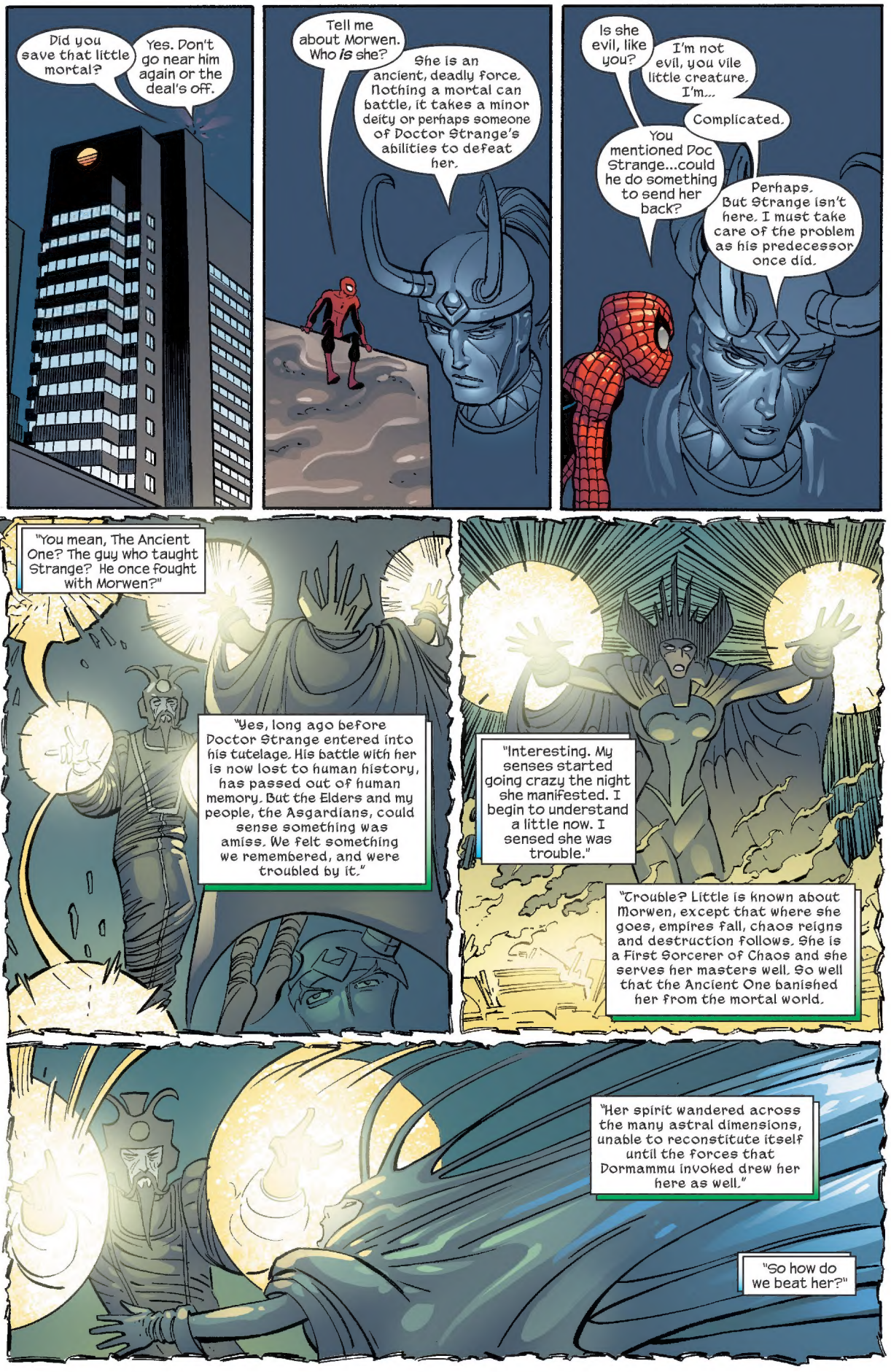
You can't just--
Can and will. You may carry him to safety, but give me your word that you will stay by my side, or I will allow him to die.


I can't, I...all right. Fine. I give you my *word*, I'll come back!
Very well.

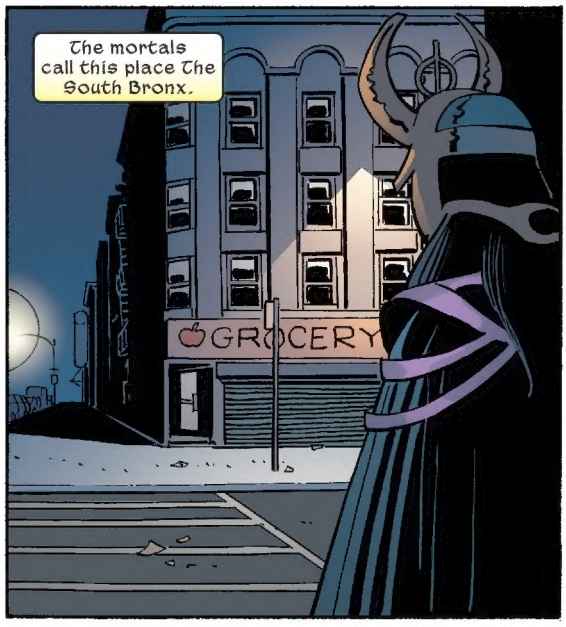
Runes of life and blood, touch this mortal...

...And restore his life in the name of the All Father and the Sacred Tree.

I almost expected him to weasel out of the deal somehow, but he did as promised. I got the guy as far away from the god as I thought I could.
Even thought about breaking my promise to Loki...but if he kept his side, how could I do less than him?


Did you save that little mortal?
Yes. Don't go near him again or the deal's off.
Tell me about Morwen. Who *is* she?
She is an ancient, deadly force. Nothing a mortal can battle, it takes a minor deity or perhaps someone of Doctor Strange's abilities to defeat her.
Is she evil, like you?
I'm not evil, you vile little creature. I'm...
Complicated.
You mentioned Doc Strange...could he do something to send her back?
Perhaps. But Strange isn't here. I must take care of the problem as his predecessor once did.
"You mean, The Ancient One? The guy who taught Strange? He once fought with Morwen?"
"Yes, long ago before Doctor Strange entered into his tutelage. His battle with her is now lost to human history, has passed out of human memory. But the Elders and my people, the Asgardians, could sense something was amiss. We felt something we remembered, and were troubled by it."
"Interesting. My senses started going crazy the night she manifested. I begin to understand a little now. I sensed she was trouble."
"Trouble? Little is known about Morwen, except that where she goes, empires fall, chaos reigns and destruction follows. She is a First Sorcerer of Chaos and she serves her masters well. So well that the Ancient One banished her from the mortal world.
"Her spirit wandered across the many astral dimensions, unable to reconstitute itself until the forces that Dormammu invoked drew her here as well."
"So how do we beat her?"

The only way to defeat Morwen is to drive her from the body she currently occupies. Unfortunately, the force of such a separation could drive the host body insane, or even kill the one that carries her.
That's not an option. Whoever she took over, she's innocent in all this. We can't let her be killed over this.
Death frightens you. Doesn't it?
No. Meaningless deaths offend me.
I see. Interesting.
Because you have kept your word, and because you are no real threat to me, I have a proposition for you.
In order: Yes, I did, yes I am, and I'm not interested.
Let me try this another way, I...apologize.
You? Apologize? You?
Look, I'm sorry, but if you've been possessed by the spirit of a Boy Scout, there's nothing I can do to help you.
Well, except teach you some camp songs--
I offer my help, since your friend Doctor Strange is unavailable.
What makes you think I will trust you at all?
You don't need to trust me. You can simply work alongside me if you choose not to work with me. But I ask that you do not interfere with me in facing Morwen.
Do we have a deal?
Yes. On the condition that no one else dies.
Good.


The mortals call this place The South Bronx.
GROCERY

I believe it may be sufficient to my needs.
BLATTA
BLATTA
BLATTA
Too many of them --augh!

BLAM!
It's no good--we gotta bail! They're gonna kill us all!
No, they will not kill you.

I will protect you. And give your weapons the power to overcome anyone in the world... tonight.

Our guns!
Wicked!

This is but a start, a warm-up, for I have far to go, and much to do, before the end.
Because all things must come to their respective ends.
Even the world itself.
TO BE CONTINUED...